

PCB Cleanup Proceeding for Portage Creek

Allied Paper/Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Site

Kalamazoo, Michigan

May 2012

Informational meeting

The EPA is holding a public meeting Thursday, May 31, to update the community about a proposed cleanup at the Portage Creek site.

The meeting will start at 6:30 p.m. at the Radisson Plaza Hotel, 100 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo.

EPA representatives and other officials will make formal presentations and then be available to discuss the cleanup. If you need special accommodations at the meeting, contact the EPA community involvement coordinator Don de Blasio (see below) by May 21.

Contact the EPA

For more information, or if you have comments about the Portage Creek cleanup, contact:

Don de Blasio

Community Involvement Coordinator
EPA

77 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604-3590
312-886-4360 or 800-621-8431,
Ext. 64360, weekdays, 8:30 a.m.
to 4:30 p.m.
deblasio.don@epa.gov

For more information

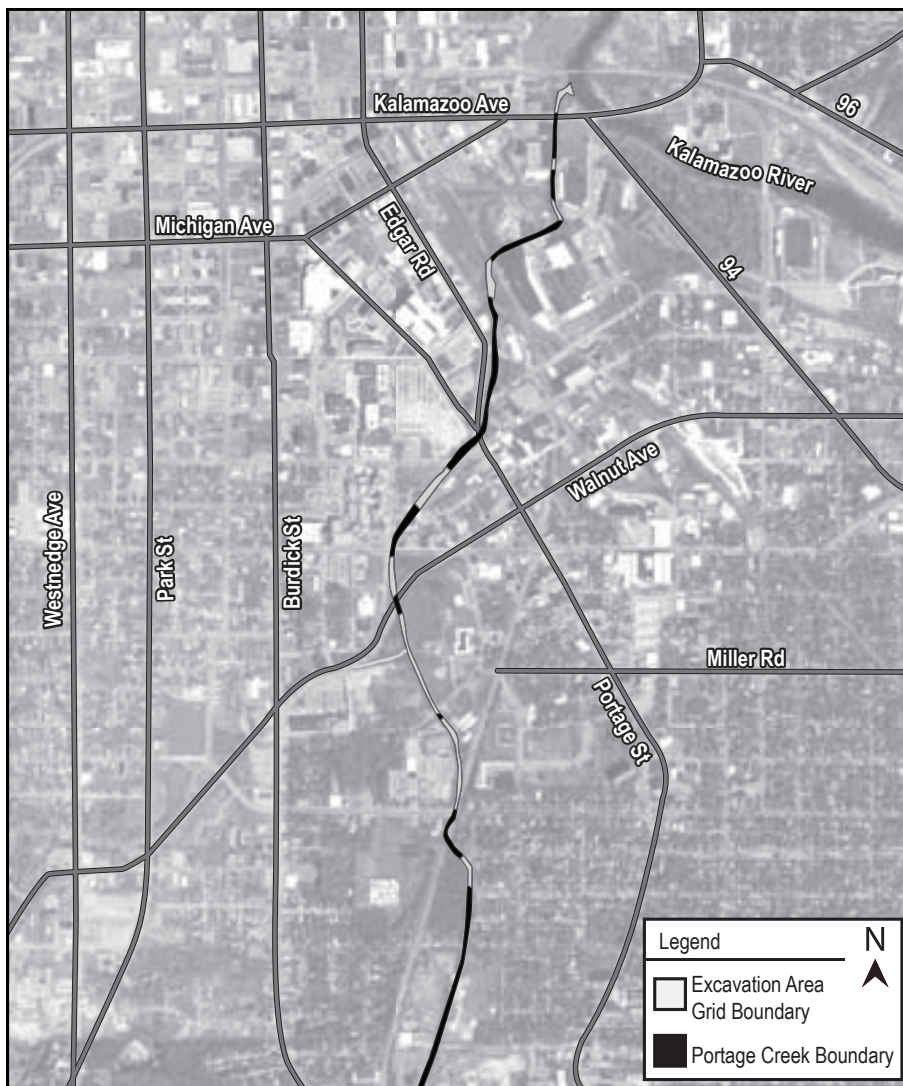
You can learn more about the cleanup online at:
www.epa.gov/region5/cleanup/kalproject.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is conducting a \$15.8 million cleanup of PCB contamination in Portage Creek, which began in September 2011. The Agency considers this a time-critical cleanup because of potential health concerns to people from direct contact with PCBs in the creek.

The EPA will have a public meeting (see box, left) to explain the cleanup, which could take two or more years to complete.

Cleanup overview

Workers will remove sediment from Portage Creek, dig up soil immediately adjacent to the creek, stabilize creek banks where necessary to prevent future contamination and erosion, dispose of contaminated materials at a chemical waste landfill, and clean up non-contaminated sediment and soil. Fences



Portage Creek Excavation Areas

will be put up and signs will be posted to keep people from being exposed to PCBs during the cleanup. Once the contaminated material is removed, workers will test and monitor the area, fill excavated areas with clean material and topsoil, and plant native plants. The EPA expects to remove about 18,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil and sediment.

Progress to date

The EPA removed of 1,000 cubic yards of PCB-contaminated soil from an area of the site called Slope Area 7) in April 2012.

The EPA also conducted sampling in nearby Upjohn Park to determine if there were any PCBs in the park soil. Results did not detect any PCBs present in the park.

The EPA will begin cleanup activities in the creek channel in Slope Area 6, between Stockbridge Avenue and Lake Street. This activity is planned to start on May 21 and be completed in June 2012. To dig within the creek channel, it is necessary to pump water into the creek. The pumps required to do this are quite large, so residents may notice additional noise from the pumping system.

Planned additional work for 2012

After the cleanup in Slope Area 6 is complete, the EPA plans to clean up Slope Area 5 at Axtell Creek, starting in July 2012. After completing the Axtell Creek clean up, the EPA will begin cleaning up an area along Upjohn Park starting in late August 2012.

If weather conditions are favorable, the EPA may also dig up sediment in Slope Area 5 before the end of 2012.

Site history

The Portage Creek site begins at East Cork Street and follows the creek north about three miles to the Kalamazoo River (see map). The site is bordered by residential, commercial and industrial properties, as well as undeveloped properties.

Between 1954 and the early 1970s, the site was used by several paper companies that recycled carbonless copy paper. The recycling process used PCBs, resulting in large amounts of contaminated waste upstream from the Portage Creek site. Until 1970, wastewater from the recycling process was released directly into a 29-acre pond within Portage Creek.

In 1977, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources issued a public health advisory regarding PCB contamination at the site, and advised residents not to eat fish caught from the creek. In August 1990, the Portage Creek site, as part of the Allied Paper/Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Superfund Site, was placed on the

National Priorities List, a roster of the nation's most hazardous waste sites.

Between 1990 and 2000, several parties responsible for the contamination, including Georgia-Pacific LLC and Millennium Holdings, investigated the Portage Creek site under an agreement with the EPA and the state of Michigan. In November 2010, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources collected soil and sediment samples that showed high levels of PCB contamination.

Kalamazoo River cleanup studies

In April 2011, Georgia-Pacific, a party responsible for pollution at the site, submitted a site investigation report, which showed where and how soil and sediment sampling was conducted in Area 1 of the site. (Area 1 is the Kalamazoo River between Morrow Dam and the former Plainwell Dam, and also includes Portage Creek between Cork Street and the Kalamazoo River.) The report was revised in October 2011 and February 2012. The EPA anticipates approving the revised report for Area 1 in June 2012. Another separate report, which provides potential cleanup options for Area 1, will be submitted by Georgia-Pacific to the EPA in the fall of 2012.

Additional soil and sediment sampling will be conducted in Area 2 this summer and the site investigation report for Area 2 will be submitted to the EPA in November 2012. Area 2 is the Kalamazoo River between the former Plainwell Dam and the Otsego City Dam.

The plan to conduct sampling in Area 3 was approved by the EPA in May, and soil and sediment sampling will begin later this summer and fall. Area 3 is the Kalamazoo River between the Otsego City Dam and the Otsego Dam.

Plainwell Mill update

The EPA is reviewing the revised site investigation report that was submitted by Georgia-Pacific in April 2012. Additional site investigation activities, including underlying ground water monitoring, will be conducted until September. The site investigation report for the Plainwell Mill area will be revised to include additional investigation activities and will be submitted to the EPA in October 2012.

Landfill updates

12th Street Landfill

Weyerhaeuser has completed most of the cleanup activities at the 12th Street Landfill. The EPA is reviewing how Weyerhaeuser will operate and maintain the landfill site in the future. Weyerhaeuser submitted the cleanup report to the EPA and is now addressing the Agency's comments. When the EPA approves this report, the cleanup activities at the 12th Street Landfill will be complete.

Willow Boulevard/A-Site Landfill

In the spring of 2011, Georgia-Pacific began construction of a landfill cap at the Willow Boulevard/A-Site Landfill. The cleanup also includes removing contaminated soil from nearby wetlands and removing sheet piling at the A Site part of the landfill. In 2011, Georgia-Pacific completed the majority of the cleanup activities at the Willow Boulevard part of the site and the cleanup of the wetland east of Davis Creek. Georgia-Pacific expects to complete most of the cleanup activities at the A-Site Landfill by 2013.

Allied Paper Landfill

The EPA is evaluating cleanup alternatives for an area of the landfill called Operational Unit 1. The EPA will choose a final cleanup option after the Agency has provided the public an opportunity to comment on the recommended cleanup plan. The EPA anticipates proposing a cleanup plan for public comment by this summer or fall. The EPA will send out the proposed plan to begin the comment period and announce the date and location of the associated public meeting.



Portage Creek Removal Areas

PCB Cleanup Proceeding for Portage Creek

Public Meeting
Thursday, May 31
6:30 p.m.
Radisson Plaza Hotel
100 W. Michigan Ave.
Kalamazoo


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ALLIED PAPER/PORTAGE CREEK/KALAMAZOO RIVER SITE: PCB Cleanup Proceeding for Portage Creek

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

FIRST CLASS


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